

WORLD BOOK DAY SMILES AT HAPPY DAYS



By Caroline Wiles

A super smiley parade of characters joined us for this year's World Book Day. The children's excitement at dressing up is infectious and their language describing their alter-egos amazing. All our favourite books were represented, from the cutest Hungry Caterpillar to oodles of swirly princesses and stupendous superheroes, to mention just a few. Throughout the nursery, our little ones love nothing better than snuggling up in a cosy reading corner to share a book and World Book Day gives us another wonderful reason to celebrate books of all shapes and sizes with them. In the words of Dr Seuss;

"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child."

As the sunshine peeked out in mid-march, our Bumblebees excitedly unearthed their first potato harvest of the year. Their enthusiastically cleaned crop was proudly presented to Chef Simon who worked his magic, producing a scrummy potato salad to accompany tea.

The children's fascination with growing their own food is infectious and Chef Simon, keen to encourage healthy eating and "grow your own", is planning an expansion to our vegetable plot as summer looms. Children are at the heart of everything we do here at Happy Days Nursery so we constantly reflect on our practice to give our little ones the best experience of nursery life we can. A recent busy weekend enabled us to re-vamp & reorganise some of our spaces. Our latest evolution enables us to plan and prepare for a Forest School area. We couldn't be more excited and hope to share more forest news very soon. The start of 2025 has been mega busy, with many families taking advantage of the Working Parents Entitlement to funding. We have limited sessions available for Summer and Autumn 2025, and with funding being extended from September, 2026 is filling up fast. If you are interested in a place for your child at Happy Days please contact us early to avoid disappointment. For more information, please do not hesitate to phone the office (01795 424348), or visit our website www.happydaysuk.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.



2025 SO FAR - SWALE LADIES WHO LATTE



By Rachel Chapman

It was a very busy first meeting in January with over 20 Ladies joining, some new and some familiar faces. Everyone shared what they were going to do differently this year in business. We also enjoyed a very inspirational talk from Sarah Stephen talking about working on business through adversity and using anxiety as a super power

We met on the 19th February in the Barn. During this time, we had the lovely Karen Stanley from Mabel and Stanley Publishing, talking about producing a business book or ebook and the process that you need to go through and highlighting the benefits that this can bring to your business.

We had 20 ladies join us with various different businesses, we welcomed four new ladies to the group and also celebrated that some of our ladies are finalists for the upcoming Kent Business Awards which is an annual event held at the Ashford International Hotel. We also had lots of donations for Sateda share wear.



The Iwade Observer

APRIL 2025



ELVIS HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

On a beautiful spring day last month, we had the pleasure of escorting many villagers and their friends and family up to London for an afternoon of entertainment upon the unique Tereza Joanne moored boat in the King George V Dock.



We had stunning views across the water and also the runway of the London City Airport, the food was amazing and there was plenty of empty plates!



The Elvis Tribute (Scott Elvis) was extremely good and a true entertainer, he made the afternoon very intimate and enjoyable and managed to get a few of us on the dance floor!



We had a smooth journey and were back in Iwade ahead of schedule which was just perfect! Following the trip, we received lots of lovely feedback from some of our travellers. Whilst the reviews have been wonderful to hear,

please remember that this isn't a business- this is for our village community so if you have any ideas of possible places to visit please do let us know!

Our next trip isn't until June but we will still be busy behind the scenes and taking bookings. All details are on our Facebook page and newsletter and we will soon be launching our own Iwade Tours website!

Many thanks,
Liz and Matthew



REVIEWS



"Absolutely fabulous trip today for Elvis. Well done and thank you" - Lorna

"Loved it and the little extras. Thank You" - Sue

"Such a lovely day and so well organised. Thank you" - Mary

"Well organised, love the extras and Elvis was brilliant" - Angie

"Looking forward to Mamma Mia" - Yvonne

LABOUR MP FOR SITTINGBOURNE AND SHEPPEY JOINS NEW LABOUR GROUP IN PARLIAMENT STANDING UP FOR COASTAL COMMUNITIES

The MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey has joined a new group of Labour MPs representing coastal seats who are pushing the government to take strong action to support coastal communities.

MP Kevin McKenna said he was joining the group to ensure the voice of coastal communities like Sittingbourne and Sheppey was being heard loud and clear in government.

The group is being chaired by Polly Billington MP, one of a large number of new Labour MPs that took coastal seats off the Conservatives at the 2024 general election. Labour now has 66 MPs representing coastal parts of the country, including many in Kent, meaning the group will have a strong voice in parliament when it comes to championing coastal towns.

After fourteen years under the Conservatives many coastal areas suffer from above average levels of deprivation and poorer health and educational attainment. The group say struggling economies and the terrible state of public services in these areas was the biggest reasons voters turned away from the Conservatives at the 2024 general election, and that the new government needed to prove it could turn that situation around. They say the key to this is ensuring the government deliver on the commitments they have made to end the crisis in the NHS, fix public transport, tackle crime and antisocial behaviour, and deliver more money in people’s pockets.

The MPs have also expressed concern about the negative impact on coastal areas of plans that have been suggested by the Reform UK leader Nigel Farage, such as making people pay for health insurance to access the NHS.

The new group is holding regularly meetings with government ministers to raise issues of high concern to voters in their communities. In particular, the Coastal Labour group are united in pushing hard for investment that will deliver well-managed public services and a stronger economy in the coastal towns they represent.

Chair of the Labour Coastal Group, Polly Billington MP said:

“Voters in seats like mine rejected the Conservatives last year because Labour promised renewal, after fourteen years of Tory indifference to the unique challenges facing coastal towns. Now that we’re in government we’ve got to prove to people that we can deliver on key issues like the NHS, tackling crime, and building a stronger economy.”

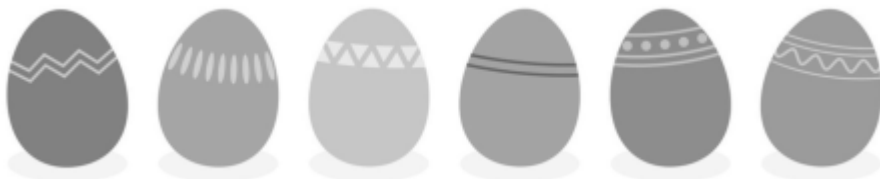
“That is why I am pleased to be chairing this new coastal grouping of Labour MPs, who will make sure that the voices of coastal areas across the country have their voices heard in government.”

MP Kevin McKenna said:

“That coastal communities face many additional, engrained challenges in terms of health, transport, social and economic inequalities has become all too clear in recent years. This has been a major driver of the anger and deep frustration with the status quo so many of my constituents feel. We have to act now to reverse this, and we have a once in a generation opportunity with this new Labour government to make the big, structural investments in places like Sheppey and its gateway towns of Sittingbourne and Sheerness to not only improve people’s health, wellbeing and prosperity, but also drive the economic growth the whole of the UK needs.”

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NEWS FROM CITIZENS ADVICE SWALE

Are you struggling to pay your council tax bill? It is a difficult time for people who are battling rising costs for food and essentials - as well as seeing their bills creep up.

There is support available and you might be entitled to pay less, or not at all, depending on your circumstances. For example, if you are the only adult living in your home, your council tax bill can be reduced by a quarter. When the council works out how many people live in a property, there are certain ‘disregarded’ people that do not count and this can reduce your council tax bill, such as under-18s, full-time students and people with severe mental impairments. If you or someone you live with is disabled and your home has been adapted, you can ask to be placed down one band.

Swale Borough Council also offers Council Tax Support, which is designed for people on low incomes, and can reduce the amount of council tax you have to pay. And lastly, if you are struggling to pay for essentials, your council can reduce your bill further, or cancel it altogether, under what is known as a ‘discretionary reduction.’ This usually only happens if you can provide evidence that you are suffering severe hardship and can’t afford to pay council tax.

Whatever circumstances you are in, if you are struggling with your council tax payments, it is important to let your council know. Citizens Advice Swale is also here to help you find a way forward, should you need our support.

Here is how to contact us for advice:

Drop-in sessions (no appointment necessary)

- Monday, 10am-12pm, Swale House, Sittingbourne
- Tuesday, 10am-12pm, Sheppey Gateway, Sheerness (except the second Tuesday of every month, which is held at Sheerness East Working Mens Club)
- Tuesday, 11.30am-1.30pm, Murston Family Hub, Tonge Road
- Wednesday & Friday, 10am-12pm, 43 Stone Street, Faversham

Telephone advice

Call Adviceline on freephone 0808 278 7979 (Monday-Friday 10am-3.30pm)

Email advice

Contact us online at www.citizensadviceSwale.uk/ email-general-advice (Monday-Wednesday)

Debt advice

Request a call back from our money advice team at www.citizensadviceSwale.uk/debt

To stay up to date with our opening times, please visit www.citizensadviceSwale.uk or follow us on Facebook.



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MAKING GREAT CONNECTIONS

By John Guest

This is my 20th column for the Observer. Coincidentally, this year is the 20th anniversary of IwadeVillage.co.uk. You may have read about it on the back page of last month's magazine under the heading "Connecting the Community for 20 years". It is one of a number of projects aimed at bringing us all together.

I often get asked if the church (building) is open. All kinds of people, most not particularly religious, are looking for somewhere quiet to go and perhaps light a candle and remember a loved one. Many also derive much comfort from attending local groups where they can make new friends and just chat. Thank God for groups like that and for "social media" sites where we can connect with others.

No one likes to be the object of pity or on the receiving end of "charity". None of us wants to be considered "a needy case". We just want somewhere we can turn up and have a chat and maybe a home-cooked meal, share a beer or glass of wine and perhaps play cards or a board game. We're not especially lonely (not really); we're just looking for friends.

We've got a few groups like this around the Iwade community; some are attached to faith groups, some aren't. None of them try to get you to follow any particular creed or regulation; that's not why they're there. These groups exist to promote friendship and meeting together – something most of us like to do. You probably know of some near you. By all means, let me know about them and I'll happily give them a plug in this column!

The Woolpack and MewsBrews are great hubs as are All Saints and Iwade school community. I've been delighted to meet some of you at the school gate or at Assembly on Sunday each month. The Book Club, the Monday Friendship Group and the Men's Breakfast Club that meet in the Barn are just a sample of the many opportunities to connect and how many of you have enjoyed a craft beer at The Shepherds Crook?

Why not email Nicola McKenzie on Hello@iwadevillage.co.uk and find out about more activities or just plug your own favourite?

Looking for friendship and good company? Why not try a local group? After all, they say a stranger is just a friend we haven't met yet.

God bless you!

John x

The next Parish Council meeting will be on Wednesday 12th March at 19:30 in The Barn, All Saints Close.



1945 - 2025

VE DAY

80th ANNIVERSARY

MICROPUB

PIMMS TENT

AFTERNOON TEA BOXES

ENTERTAINMENT

KIDS GAMES

SATURDAY 10TH MAY 2024

12PM - 9PM

IWADE BARN, ME9 8FP

IN THE BARN



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PASTORAL LETTER



Dear Friends,

On the 20th of April we celebrate Easter Sunday, the high spot of the Church calendar. It's when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Arriving at Easter Sunday, we must first get through Good Friday, the day when Jesus was crucified.

St. Michael & All Angels' Church Hartlip has many interesting stained-glass windows. On opposing sides of the nave, you can find two triptychs. The north series show important scenes from the life of Jesus: his conception, baptism, and resurrection. On the south side, the series of windows show the crucifixion. The left-hand panel shows Mary, the mother of Jesus, with Mary Magdalene; and on the right are his disciples Peter and John. All are focussed on the dying Jesus. As onlookers, we are witnesses to this terrible event.

In the central section of the crucifixion triptych, the picture is divided horizontally into two parts. Above is a blue sky with a sun and a moon. Below that, is an apple tree bearing many apples, representing the temptation of Eve and the introduction of evil into the world. This crucifixion image may be demonstrating the evil within mankind has fastened Jesus, God amongst us, to the cross and killed him.

As an onlooker, we can choose to turn and walk away, or to turn and realise that the Way of Jesus, a way of living based on love and compassion, forgiveness, inclusion, peace, and generosity, is how we will find fulfilment in life. And we can choose to walk that path. Walking that path of life, is what the resurrection section of the triptych on the north wall is all about. See? The apparently thin and dried up tree in the picture is flowering. Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?

Wishing you all a Happy Easter.

George Hulme, Lay Minister (Reader)

Emergency Plan Flood Contacts

Flood Line:

In the event of a flood, call Flood Line on 0345 988 1188

The Environment Agency can also provide

assistance and information - call 03708 506 506

BREAKFAST BLITZ



By Garry Vanhay

On a bright March morning 13 members of Iwade Men's Breakfast Club assembled at The Blitz Café prior to our tour of Eastchurch Aviation Museum and the Sheppey Honey Workshop next door.

The guided tour of the museum started with an introductory film explaining the history of the site where the first recognised flight by a British pilot in Britain took place in 1909. The site was home of the Royal Navy Flying School in 1911 which developed into the Royal Air Force in 1918. The Short brothers also manufactured planes here (before moving to Rochester) and at one time over 3,000 were employed on the site. The RAF closed the site in 1946 and the Prison Service then started to develop the site into the complex it is today. Next door at Sheppey Honey the explanation given by Derrick of the life cycle of Bees and how Honey is made was fascinating (did you know it is estimated the bees have to fly 3.3 million miles to make a kilo of honey!) We would not only like to say thank you to the team who looked after us during our visit but recommend a visit to anyone interested as it's only a 20-minute drive from Iwade and admission is only £2 and children under 16 are free.

1) Welcome and Apologies The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies receveived and accepted from Cllrs. D. Waters and S. Waters.
2) Declarations of Interest and Dispensations: None. 3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting Proposed by Cllr. Holowczycki and seconded by Cllr. Hartley, the minutes of the monthly Parish Council Meeting held on 8 January 2025 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.
4) Visitors/Public Time 1. Visitors: A member of the allotments association spoke to the council about the Raspberry Hill community benefit fund. Council members agreed to support their application for CCTV. Cllr. Tolhurst spoke on behalf of a resident concerned about the safety of pedestrian access at the A249 roadworks. The Clerk will contact Jackson Civil Engineering. Action: Clerk 2. County and Borough Councillors: Cllr. Baldock advised Kent County Council (KCC) will hold their budget meeting on Thursday 13 February. The biggest affect from the budget to Iwade will be cuts to the Highways budget. There is not enough money to carry out the maintenance needed to Kents Highways. Also, the cutting of Community Wardens who are valuable resources. Swale Borough Council are also due to hold their budget meeting. Labour have proposed the budget should cut members grants and cancel the loneliness project. A group of councillors met to propose the budget cuts are restored. Local Heritage Listing will be reviewed again this year and Cllr. Baldock encouraged council members to draw up a list and submit it to Swale. For example, old Victorian letter boxes in walls. The local plan for the Highstead development was called in by the secretary of state. Full information was not provided to council members to make a decision. It is concerning that this decision is by-passing local democracy.

COUNCIL MINUTES ROUNDUP

IWADE PARISH COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 12TH FEBRUARY

PRESENT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr. S. Tolhurst – Chair• Cllr. P. Holowczycki• Samantha Gray, Clerk• Cllr. C. Gomez• Cllr. P. Hyde• County Cllr. M. Baldock• Cllr. J. Hartley• Cllr. K. Rivers-Simpson• One Resident
3. Police Constable: No report received. Council members asked the Clerk to write to the Police Constable. Action: Clerk
5) Village Matters 1. Plaxtol Investments: Plaxtol Investments looked into the land they own off Mansfield Drive and advised they do not think there is a significant issue that requires any attention from them. They will consider the Parish Council taking ownership of the land. Council members asked the Clerk to enquire if there will be a fee for the land and to arrange a date for council members to meet and view the land. Action: Clerk 2. Ferry Road water leak: Southern Water sent a water sample to an independent laboratory around the 7th February and expect to receive the results in two weeks. Kent County Council agreed for Southern Water to send off the water sample and suggested a comparator sample is taken, which Southern Water confirmed. When the test result is received, this will determine who should take action to resolve the leak.
6) Planning: applications are viewable on Swale: http://pa.midkent.gov.uk/online-applications ; KCC: https://cloud2.atriumsoft.com/KCCePlanningOPS/searchPageLoad.do
7) Correspondence 1. Local Nature Recovery Strategy Public Consultation – email 22.01: This consultation aims to help habitats and identify priority species. The consultation closes 12th March and members asked the Clerk to re-post on Facebook. Action: Clerk 2. Pond Clearance at Woodpecker Nature Park – 27.01: Due to the pond being home to Great Crested newts and water voles, the parish council needs qualified support to clear reedmace in the pond. Cllr. Tolhurst spoke to the Environment Agency 12 months ago and they advised they did not have the resources to help. He will contact them again. Swale Borough Council have agreed to remove the duck house which appears to be rotten and tidy up the brambles around the pond.

<p>The pond was made for attenuation purposes and members believe Swale Borough Council is responsible for it’s maintenance, health and safety and biodiversity. The Clerk will speak to Swale Borough Council.</p> <p>Action: Cllr. Tolhurst/Clerk</p> <p>3. Devolved Maintenance of the Highway Soft Landscape Assets 2025-2026: Council members want to continue with devolved maintenance. A meeting is booked with KCC to discuss completing the health and safety self-assessment of competence form.</p> <p>Action: Cllr. Tolhurst/Cllr.Holowczycki/Clerk</p> <p>4. Civility and Respect Pledge and Standards Consultation: Members decided not to sign up to the pledge.</p> <p>5. The Parish Council Support Scheme Round 3 – email 05.02: The scheme will grant up to £1,000.00 to deliver local initiatives supporting people in financial hardship specifically linked to isolation and loneliness as a result of the cost of living crisis. Members agreed to submit an application for a community group and supporting the lonely on Christmas Day. Action: Clerk/RFO</p>
<p>8) Parish Council Matters</p> <p>2. Parish Councillor application: The Chairman brought this item on the agenda forward. Council members co-opted Kelvin Rivers-Simpson onto the Parish Council. He duly signed the acceptance of office form.</p> <p>1. Finance committee members: Cllrs. Rivers-Simpson and Gomez agreed to join the finance committee. Action: Clerk</p> <p>3. Councillor Resignation: Members noted the resignation of Cllr. Fuszard and asked the Clerk to send him a letter of thanks from the parish council. Action: Clerk</p> <p>4. Appointment of Vice-Chair: Cllr. Scott Waters was nominated as Vice-Chair in his absence. The Clerk will bring the acceptance of office form to the next meeting. Action: Clerk</p>
<p>9) Finance</p> <p>1. Quotation from Gala Lights - 2025 Proposal for Christmas Decorations: Council members requested two more quotations are sourced. Cllr. Gomez will draft a letter to Gala Lights regarding their quotation. Action: RFO/Cllr. Gomez</p> <p>2. Quotation for Union Flags, VE Day Flags and bunting: Proposed by Cllr. Rivers-Simpson and seconded by Cllr. Hyde, members agreed to purchase two union flags, union bunting and two VE day 80th anniversary flags at a cost of £275.86 including VAT.</p> <p>3. Chairmanship Conference: Proposed by Cllr. Holowczycki and seconded by Cllr. Gomez, members agreed the cost of £84.00 including VAT for the Chairmanship Conference.</p>

<p>4. Bank Signatory Management Form: Defferred to the next meeting. Action: Clerk</p> <p>5. SLCC Membership Renewal 2025-26: Proposed by Cllr. Tolhurst and seconded by Cllr. Hyde, members agreed to renew the SLCC membership at a cost of £190.00.</p> <p>6. Accounts and Cheques raised at this meeting: Proposed by Cllr. Tolhurst and seconded by Cllr. Rivers-Simpson, members noted the budget figures and the accounts to 31 January. The following payments were agreed, Cllrs. Holowczycki and Tolhurst to log in and authorise payments. Action: Cllrs. Holowczycki/Tolhurst</p>
<p>10) Projects - Updates on Current and New</p> <p>1. VE Day 8th May 2025: Members discussed the upcoming event and asked the Clerk to reach out on social media for a serving personnel to lower the flag at The Barn. Members will hold a working group meeting to discuss plans further. Action: Clerk</p> <p>2. Future public events: Cllr. Gomez spoke to the council about holding a candlelit quartet evening, and organising a meeting on Christmas Day aimed at people experiencing loneliness. Cllrs. Rivers-Simpson, Gomez and Hartley will form a working group and report back to a full council meeting. Action: Rivers-Simpson/Gomez/Hartley</p> <p>3. Litter Pick: Council members agreed to hold a litter picking event on Sunday 4th May. Keep on the agenda. Action: Clerk</p> <p>4. Tracker: Cllr. Tolhurst updated the Parish Council tracking document and circulated to all members.</p>
<p>11) Reports from Representatives</p> <p>1. Village Hall Committee: No report received.</p> <p>2. KALC Area Representative: Cllr. Holowczycki circulated the meeting minutes to all members.</p>
<p>12) Items for Next Agenda: Instagram and other social media. Action: Clerk</p> <p>13) Closed Session</p> <p>1. Village Centre Litter Collections: Litter collections appear to be reinstated. The council are waiting for a response from Omnicroft to confirm this. The meeting closed at 09:44pm</p>